

Message Text

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USDEL MBFR VIENNA

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, NATO, MBFR

SUBJECT: MBFR: EASTERN GROUND FORCE DATA

REF: (A) MBFR VIENNA 132 DTG 160934Z MAR 78, (B) MBFR

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1. BASED ON INITIAL ANALYSIS OF EASTERN DATA (REFTELS), AND IN CONNECTION WITH THE MBFR WORKING GROUP ASSESSMENT WHICH SHOULD BEGIN SHORTLY, WE OFFER THE FOLLOWING PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS:

(A) UNANTICIPATED DIFFERENCES

. EASTERN FIGURES TABLED FOR ELEMENTS OF SOVIET AND GDR FORCES PROVED SIGNIFICANTLY LOWER THAN NATO ANTICIPATED. THE FIGURE FOR SOVIET FORCES IN "MAJOR" FORMATIONS WAS LOWER BY 66,400 (16 PERCENT) THAN WESTERN ESTIMATES. THIS DISPARITY IS VIRTUALLY THE SAME AS THE NUMBER OF SOVIET TROOPS (68,000) THE WEST HAS PROPOSED FOR PHASE I WITHDRAWAL. AT THE SECRET

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SAME TIME, WHILE EASTERN DATA ON GDR FORCES IN "MAJOR" FORMATIONS WERE VERY CLOSE TO WESTERN ESTIMATES (95 PERCENT), FIGURES FOR GDR FORCES IN "OTHER" FORMATIONS CAME TO ONLY 65 PERCENT OF WESTERN ESTIMATES.

. ALTHOUGH THE DIFFERENCES FOR SOVIET "MAJOR" AND

GDR "OTHER" FORCES MAY BE PARTLY DEFINITIONAL, THE DISPARITIES, PARTICULARLY FOR THE SOVIETS, ARE TROUBLING IN VIEW OF THE ATTENTION PAID SOVIET AND GDR FORCES BY WESTERN INTELLIGENCE. ESPECIALLY WITH REGARD TO THE SOVIETS, THIS ATTENTION HAS LED TO THE CONCLUSION BY NATO ALLIES THAT WESTERN FIGURES ARE SUBSTANTIALLY ACCURATE. DIFFERENCES THIS SIGNIFICANT IN AN AREA WHERE THE WEST HAS CONFIDENCE IN ITS INTELLIGENCE COULD LEAD TO QUESTIONING BY NATO ALLIES AS TO THE OVERALL VALIDITY OF WESTERN DATA (USNATO 1345).

(B) A CURIOUS CONGRUITY

. PRIOR TO 15 MARCH, NO WESTERN ANALYST WOULD HAVE PREDICTED 99 PERCENT ACCURACY IN WESTERN ESTIMATES OF OVERALL CZECH FORCE LEVELS. THIS CURIOUS CONGRUITY, HOWEVER, RAISES SEVERAL QUESTIONS.

--WERE THERE ANY SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES IN WESTERN ACCESS TO, OR ANALYSIS OF, CZECH DATA COMPARED TO THAT OF OTHER FORCES (FOR EXAMPLE, WESTERN FIGURES WERE ONLY 72 PERCENT ACCURATE FOR POLISH UNITS);

--WHY WAS IT ONLY IN THE CZECH CASE THAT THE WEST UNDER-ESTIMATED THE FORCES IN "MAJOR" FORMATIONS.

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(C) ANTICIPATED DIFFERENCES:

. MAJOR PROBLEMS WITH POLISH DATA WERE ANTICIPATED. NEVERTHELESS, THE AMOUNT OF THE DISCREPANCY IN EAST/WEST DATA IS STARTLING, AS POLISH "OTHER" FORCES COME TO ONLY 46 PERCENT OF WESTERN ESTIMATES. HOWEVER, WHILE THE CORRELATION BETWEEN TOTAL EAST/WEST DATA ON POLAND (72 PERCENT) IS THE LOWEST OF THE FOUR WP PARTICIPANTS, THE WESTERN ESTIMATE OF POLISH "MAJOR" FORMATIONS (86.4 PERCENT) IS BETTER THAN ITS ESTIMATE OF SOVIET "MAJOR" FORMATIONS (83.7 PERCENT).

(D) VARIANCE AND DISTRIBUTION

. THERE IS A ROUGHLY CONSISTENT VARIANCE OF APPROXIMATELY FIFTEEN PERCENT BETWEEN MANY FACETS OF THE TABLED WP DATA AND WESTERN ESTIMATES. GIVEN THE OVERALL RELATIONSHIP OF EASTERN TO WESTERN DATA (805,000/936,000 EQUALS 86 PERCENT) THIS WAS TO BE EXPECTED. HOWEVER, THIS RELATIVELY CONSISTENT VARIATION MAY FACILITATE EASTERN ATTEMPTS TO ATTRIBUTE THE DISPARITY BETWEEN WP DATA AND WESTERN ESTIMATES TO A WESTERN MISPERCEPTION OF EASTERN

AVERAGE MANNING LEVELS.

. HOWEVER, THERE IS AN UNEVEN DISTRIBUTION AS REGARDS PERCENTAGES OF WP FORCES INVOLVED IN THE OVERALL EASTERN SHORTFALL OF 132,000. SOVIET MANPOWER COMPRISES 53 PERCENT OF THE WP FORCES, AND APPROXIMATELY 45 PERCENT (59,700) OF THE SHORTFALL; POLISH FORCES REPRESENT 18.4 PERCENT OF THE WP TOTAL BUT 43 PERCENT (57,400) OF THE SHORTFALL; GDR FORCES MAKE UP 11.5 PERCENT OF THE WP TOTAL AND 10.6 PERCENT (14,000) OF THE SHORTFALL. THUS, NEARLY 89 PERCENT (117,100) OF THE TOTAL SHORTFALL IS CONCENTRATED IN EITHER SOVIET "MAJOR"

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FORMATIONS OR IN POLISH FORCES (TWO-THIRDS OF WHICH ARE IN "OTHER" FORMATIONS).

(E) SOVIET/NSWP FORCE RATIO

. TABLED DATA ON SOVIET FORCES REPRESENT 52.9 PERCENT OF THE OVERALL GROUND FORCE TOTAL (426,200/805,000). IN TABLE OF CM(77)100, NATO PLACED THE SOVIET/NSWP GROUND FORCE RATIO AT 51.9 PERCENT (486,000/936,000) -- A CLOSE ESTIMATE. IF THE SOVIET NGA COMPLEMENT IS MORE THAN 50 PERCENT OF THE WP NGA TOTAL, THIS COULD HAVE SOME INTERESTING IMPLICATIONS FOR PHASE II REDUCTIONS.

. FOR EXAMPLE, MAINTAINING A 53/47 PERCENT SOVIET/NSWP RATIO AT A COMMON COLLECTIVE CEILING OF 700,000,

WOULD ALLOW RESIDUAL GROUND SOVIET FORCES OF 371,000.
USING CURRENT EASTERN DATA THIS WOULD REQUIRE A SOVIET
FORCE REDUCTION OF ONLY 55,000. IN OTHER WORDS, EVEN
IF THE EAST ACCEPTED THE WEST'S PHASE I PROPOSAL, THEIR
TABLED CURRENT FORCE RATIO WOULD OBIVATE THE NEED FOR
ANY SOVIET REDUCTIONS IN PHASE II. MOREOVER, EVEN IF
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THE WEST REDUCED ITS SOVIET GROUND FORCE ESTIMATE BY
A 10 PERCENT "ERROR" (486,000-48,000 EQUALS 438,000),
AND THE SOVIETS "FOUND" AND AGREED TO ADD 3 PERCENT
(12,000) MEN TO THEIR CURRENT TOTAL,
(426,000 PLUS 12,000 EQUALS 438,000) THE SOVIETS WOULD
STILL NOT HAVE TO REDUCE IN PHASE II (438,000 MINUS
68,000 EQUALS 370,000).

. IN SHORT, A HIGH INITIAL SOVIET FORCE RATIO PRESENTS
THE SOVIETS WITH THE PROSPECT OF MBFR OPENING WITH
RELATIVELY LARGE US/USSR REDUCTIONS AND BEING FOLLOWED
BY A PHASE II WITH ONLY NON-USSR REDUCTIONS. (IF,
HOWEVER, NO NATION WERE PERMITTED TO PROVIDE MORE THAN
50 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL RESIDUAL FORCE, THE SOVIETS
WOULD HAVE TO REDUCE APPROXIMATELY A DIVISION (8,700)
IN PHASE II EVEN FROM THEIR CURRENT DATA BASE.)

2. CONCLUSIONS:

THE ABOVE DISCUSSION SUGGESTS THE FOLLOWING:

(A) DATA AND INTELLIGENCE:

--WHY IS THERE SUCH A RELATIVELY LARGE SHORTFALL
(16 PERCENT) IN THE HIGH CONFIDENCE AREA OF SOVIET
"MAJOR" FORMATIONS. (ADMITTEDLY, THE OVERALL SHORTFALL
IN SOVIET DATA IS 14 PERCENT, BUT THE DOD MBFR FACT BOOK
SUGGESTS OUR "CONFIDENCE LEVEL" WAS WITHIN
10 PERCENT); AND

--WHY WAS THERE SUCH HIGH CORRELATION OF DATA ON
CZECH FORCES.

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(B) QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION

--WHILE THE OVERALL SHORTFALL IN EASTERN DATA IS

APPROXIMATELY 15 PERCENT, IT IS CONCENTRATED IN TWO
PRIMARY AND ONE SECONDARY AREAS. THESE KEY CANDIDATES
FOR FURTHER ANALYSIS ARE:

--SOVIET "MAJOR" FORCES (45 PERCENT OF THE SHORTFALL);

--POLISH "OTHER" FORCES (30 PERCENT OF THE SHORTFALL);

AND, TO A LESSER DEGREE,

--POLISH "MAJOR" FORCES (14 PERCENT OF THE SHORTFALL).

GDR "OTHER" FORCES ARE ONLY 7 PERCENT OF THE SHORTFALL,
AND OTHER DISCREPANCIES ARE EITHER DEFINITIONAL, IN OUR
FAVOR, OR STATISTICALLY TRIVIAL.

(C) IMPACT ON PHASE II

REGARDLESS OF THE DATA BASE, A HIGH RATIO (53 PERCENT)
OF SOVIET TO NSWP MANPOWER ALLOWS THE SOVIETS
TO ABSORB A LARGE INITIAL WITHDRAWAL, TO SET FAVORABLE
RESIDUAL LIMITS WITHIN A COMMON COLLECTIVE CEILING OR,
HEDGES AGAINST ANY EVENTUAL AGREED INCREASE IN NSWP
FIGURES. FOR EXAMPLE, NSWP FORCES COULD INCREASE BY
47,000 (ABOUT THE SIZE OF THE "MISSING" POLISH AND
GDR "OTHER" FORCES) AND SOVIET FORCES WOULD STILL
REPRESENT 50 PERCENT OF THE EASTERN GROUND FORCE
TOTAL. BENNETT

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